

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the detailed Final Office Action, and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

In the outstanding Final Office Action, claims 16, 17 and 20-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("APA") illustrated in Figs. 1-5 and described in paragraphs [0006] to [0015] of the present application. Claims 1, 16 and 21 stand rejected on the basis of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting over claim 1 of U.S. Patent 7,224,579.

Upon entry of the present amendment, rejected claims 1, 16, 17 and 20-24 will have been cancelled and allowable claims 4, 18 and 25 will have been amended. In this regard, claim 4 will have been amended to incorporate substantially the same subject matter previously recited in now-cancelled claim 1. Claims 18 and 25 will have been amended to incorporate substantially the same subject matter previously recited in now-cancelled independent claims 16 and 21, from which claims 18 and 25 previously depended. The cancellation of claims 1, 16, 17 and 20-24 and the amendments to allowable claims 4, 18 and 25 should not be considered an indication of Applicant's acquiescence as to the outstanding rejection. Applicant has cancelled claims 1, 16, 17 and 20-24 and amended claims 4, 18 and 25 merely to advance prosecution and to obtain early allowance of the present application. Accordingly, the rejection of 16, 17 and 20-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and rejection of claims 1, 16 and 21 on the basis of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting are each rendered moot.

At least insofar as the Examiner has indicated claims 4 and 7-9 to be allowed and indicated claims 18, 25 and 26 to be allowable if rewritten in independent form, the Examiner is

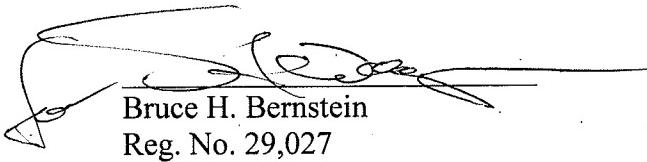
respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejections and to allow the current application to mature into a U.S. letters patent.

At least in view of the herein contained amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, together with an indication of the allowability of all pending claims, in due course. Such action is respectfully requested and is believed to be appropriate and proper.

Should the Commissioner determine that an extension of time is required in order to render this response timely and/or complete, a formal request for an extension of time, under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), is herewith made in an amount equal to the time period required to render this response timely and/or complete. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required extension of time fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions concerning this Response or the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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